

What's Inside

THD Stand on Stadium

Dedication of Kearny-Vallejo Parklet

Potential Freeway on Embarcadero

Neighborhood Theater Makes a Comback

October, 1989

No. 109



TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers



Photo by Troy Daniels

1989 Telegraph Hill Dwellers Board of Directors

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President's Message

Since the last issue of the Semaphore, THD's hard-working committees have advanced the cause of neighborhood preservation and beautification on many fronts. But it is not about saving the Bannam Place Theater, opening a new "parklet" at Kearny and Vallejo, protecting a fine architectural facade on Castle Street, investigating the merits and demerits of new sources of school funds from parking in our schoolyards, reviewing development proposals, watchdogging the Port and Wharf, stimulating additional tree plantings, or rebuilding upper Montgomery Street that I choose to emphasize for this issue.

This Fall, the Hill Dwellers have embarked on a review of both the Embarcadero Parkway and the Ballpark proposals, led by a Board of Directors that sees significant threats to our Hill in both

projects. Need anyone think twice about baseball? Isn't a new ball park, by definition, good for San Francisco? Read Bob Katz' summary of the environmental and fiscal aspects of the the ballpark in this issue before you decide. Bob and Nancy Katz, Sheryl Hamlin and Woody Stockwell have summarized degrading environmental effects to life on this Hill if greatly increased volumes of traffic result from the proposed Embarcadero Parkway. In Woody's phrase, "Let's have more park and less way," and reconsider just how much of the Marin commute should be allowed to smoke and rumble beneath your windows along the Bayfront.

Your Board is opposed to a high speed, five and six lane Embarcadero Parkway and will continue to work intensely in the months ahead to shift priorities from private cars to transit. We will emphasize the importance of a reduced roadway and strengthened F-line service. The proposed waterfront Muni line extension will serve downtown visitors and transit riders the length of Market

Street, using historic streetcars, and will run along the Embarcadero beneath the Hill to Fisherman's Wharf. This is one of many transit improvements, citywide, that rely on your support of the ½¢ sales tax on November's ballot. If there was ever a chance to make your vote count for "transit first", November will provide it.

The second great step this Board has recently taken is to significantly increase and tie support for our Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center to residential construction. The Board's program welcomes children into the neighborhood by encouraging the building of new family sized dwellings, and seeks to pay for current needed additional day care and for other programs at Telegraph Hill Center by contributions from major housing developers.

Our public school taxes are spent widely over San Francisco. THD's new program will generate funds to be spent before and after school on programs for tots through teens who live right here. The funds will come from housing built right here, programs enhancing our own neighborhood's attractiveness as a place to raise children, increase safety, and to better support the many working couples who need additional childcare facilities.

There is much more happening on this extraordinary Hill that needs your support, more than the Semaphore can cover each issue. So in closing, dear members and neighbors, let me repeat that exhortation most every THD President before me has sung: please contact the Hill Dweller committee closest to your interests, join us for some neighborly fun at the next THD social event, and follow by giving your Hill a bit of volunteer support this Fall and Winter as we work together on "the good urban life by the Bay."

Rod Freebairn-Smith

Proposed Development of #30-36 Castle St. Units

When the four units at 30-36 Castle were purchased in '87 the owners requested a variance to adjust the lot line on which the building stands so that ownership could be split down the middle, resulting in two two-unit buildings. The variance

was granted and neighbors' concerns allayed when the owners said they contemplated no new additions or changes to the building. They did, however, and a permit application was filed to alter the building radically, add a full floor and a penthouse over the 40-foot limit. Concerted effort stopped this proposal, and a subsequent one was submitted after the present requirements for Pre-Application Review came into effect. The new proposal was vastly superior; however numerous concerns were addressed to the owner's architect. Some changes were incorporated; but the drawings which were submitted in July for a new permit application still had major problems; a 2 1/2 foot parapet blocked views from behind and created a still-formidable wall, and the entire facade, an original and elegant presence on the street, was replaced.

After more negotiations and meetings, the owners, Frank and Paul Woo, appeared at the THD Board meeting on Sept. 12th with suggested revisions that would protect the facade and mitigate the presence of the added floor. Details are yet to be worked out, but it appears that the owners are sincerely attempting to make this addition a welcome one to the street.

Although current Pre-Application controls are cumbersome, the theory is a good one, for it gives neighbors in the immediate vicinity an opportunity to see proposed plans and discuss them with new owners before an application for permit is filed. This system has worked effectively with proposed additions to another building on Castle Street, and one on Pfeiffer Street, and will help in general to reduce the load on THD Board and Committee members. When neighbors are informed of proposed additions before the permit process or issuance has occurred, there will be fewer last-minute panic calls as building crews arrive. The problem at City Hall now is to make the system effective without an inordinate amount of bureaucratic entanglements.

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Proposal For A New Parkway: Disguised Freeway

Twenty years ago, the S. F. supervisors defeated the freeway to the Golden Gate Bridge. This would have destroyed our waterfront and encircled Telegraph Hill, North Beach, Russian Hill and the Marina, dividing the city from Fisherman's Wharf and the bay. In 1973 another proposal would have connected I-280 with the Embarcadero freeway, inevitably creating more traffic pressure to complete the freeway to the Golden Gate Bridge. This too was defeated, and the Federal money set aside for S.F.'s future transit uses.

Several citizens advisory committees were formed, and years of volunteer effort have been spent in planning a grand promenade along the Embarcadero parkway, which featured the bay, the waterfront, Fisherman's Wharf, and the Embarcadero as a destination to be enjoyed by all the people, but never a FREEWAY.

What is now proposed:

1. An 8 lane width of automobile traffic between the I-280 6th Street off-ramp and the Embarcadero along what is now King Street (renamed King Blvd. it is to be wider than Van Ness Avenue or Geary Blvd.) The 8 lanes consist of 3 lanes of through traffic each way plus a center median with Left turn lanes in both directions. The agreement between the Giants and the Mayor for the new Stadium mandates the above described King Blvd. When King Blvd. reaches the Embarcadero at the proposed Stadium the roadway continues at varying but excessive width the full length of the Embarcadero to Northpoint St. to handle the 30 percent estimated increase in auto traffic.

2. Two-Step pedestrian crossings

The time required for pedestrian crossing would slow down auto traffic because of the width of the new roadway. Therefore, ped-



estrians must cross in two steps: first, a signal tells pedestrians that it is safe to proceed to the middle, then a second signal will say when to continue. However, since these signals do not stop traffic, pedestrians may have to wait in the midst of traffic for an indefinite period for the second "safe" signal.

3. Token transit usage for the North Bay

An historic F line of antique street cars will run between Market Street and Fisherman's Wharf. Just the 900 visitors per hour anticipated for the Pier 39 aquarium plus other Fisherman's Wharf tourists could dominate the F line's capacity. There may be little room for the residents or workers, and passengers going downtown or to Mission Bay will have to transfer at Market St. There will be no other Muni service for the North Embarcadero.

4. Maritime use of the North Waterfront Piers

Every effort should be made to maximize maritime use of the Northern Waterfront piers for cruise ships and Break-bulk cargo shipping. However, the central median presently planned for the northern Embarcadero will prevent double-trailer trucks from turning into the piers. This will interfere with cargo movement. Furthermore, trucks exiting the piers will be required to turn right traveling north all the way to Northpoint Street before being able to change direction.

5. Token Promenade

Rather than creating a grand promenade, the plan shows most of the space monopolized by roadway. The waterfront sidewalk will be little changed from what it is today, and the westside sidewalk will be minimal at best. Just to put this in perspective for yourself, go to Fog City diner and notice the old curb under the gravel next to the railroad tracks. This is about where the cars will be whizzing past the diners.

6. What happened to the promised parkway?

Far from stretching technology toward the 21st century, the Bechtel plan is more reminiscent of 1950's road-widenings. While it is called a parkway or a boulevard, in reality it is a FREEWAY which separates the bay from the city with a wall of traffic. A Freeway by any other name...

THD is campaigning for a reduction in scale of this project and a philosophical change which considers the Embarcadero a destination in itself and not a FREEWAY.

Committee members are: Woody Stockwell (chair) (o) 781-1526 / (h) 421-5109; Bob Katz (h) 986-1890; Jeanne Milligan (h) 989-0494; Sue Cauthen (h) 391-0737; June Fraps (h) 392-1187; Nancy Katz (h) 986-1890; and Sheryl Hamlin (h) 421-2452. Please contact any of them if you can donate some time. A THD position paper is also available.

Crime Statistics, Telegraph Hill

May — July

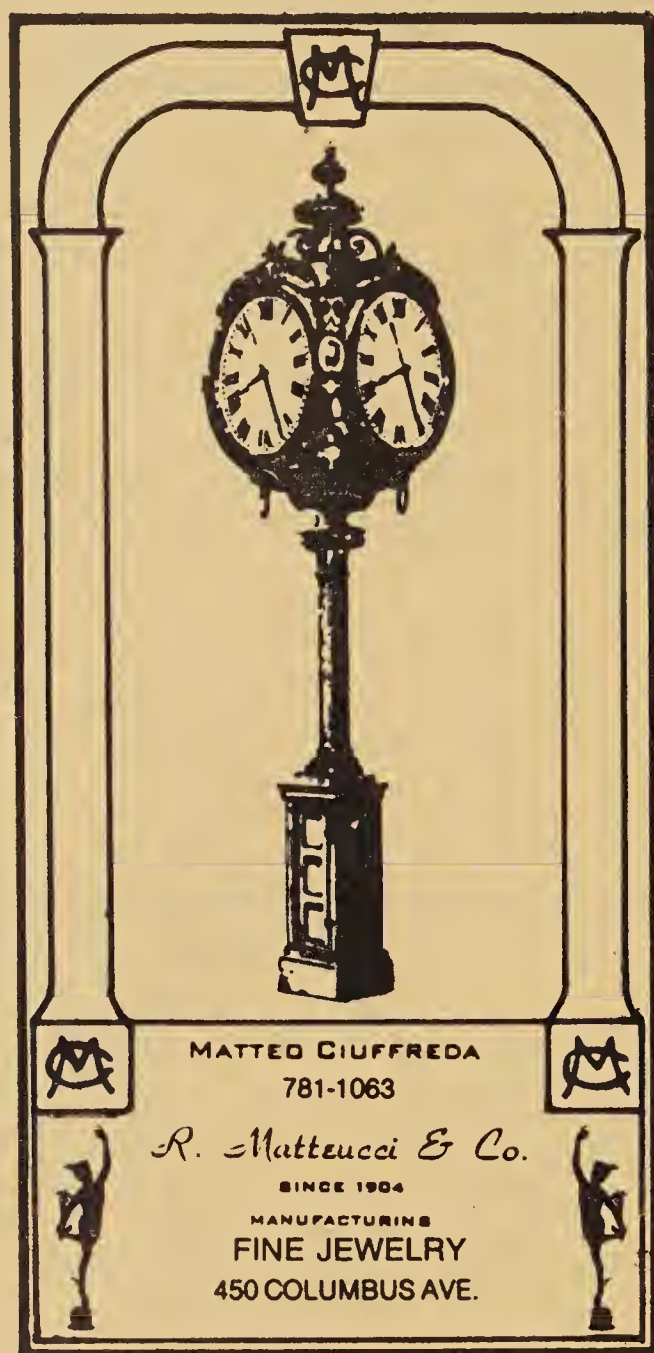
Type	1988	1989	% Change
Homicide	0	1	
Rape	5	1	
Robbery	10	7	
Assault	33	33	
Burglary	34	41	
Theft	117	154	
Auto Theft	32	37	
Other	172	222	
TOTAL	431	496	23.1%
TOTAL MAJOR*	231	274	18.6%

*Homicide, Rape, Robbery Assault, Burglary, Grand/Petty Theft, Auto Theft, Purse Snatch

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Update on Bannam Place Theater

Last April, during the run of "Live From The Cafe Depresso," the 49-seat Bannam Place Theater was closed by the S.F. Fire Prevention Department. An anonymous caller had questioned the safety of the exiting arrangements.

50 Bannam Place, at Grant and Union, has housed art studios, galleries and performance spaces for ten years. Robert Henish, current lessee, has presented contemporary American plays, poetry workshops and other innovative events since 1986. He sees the theater as the last venue dedicated to legitimate theater in North Beach.

THD member Janet Crane, a theater enthusiast, offered to negotiate acceptable safety measures with the city and won approval of a sprinkler system with a cost that was within fund-raising reach. A letter from THD supporting arts in the neighborhood helped the cause. The building permit should be issued this week. Robert hopes to reopen the theater on Valentine's Day, 1990, with a performance of "Life in the Theater" by David Mamet. Donations toward the cost of the sprinkler system, to help keep theater alive in North Beach, should be sent to: Robert Henish, Bannam Place Theater, 50 Bannam Place, San Francisco, CA 94133.

Bannam Place Theater

From the deck of an apartment of Telegraph Hill, a good tennis player could serve a ball squarely onto an enterprise unique in America...Bannam Place Theater. Three gutsy guys got tired of auditions and waiting for something to happen so they pooled their talents and resources and Bannam Place Theater became a reality. Although it is only two years old, this 40 seat theater has just completed its 12th production. An extraordinary achievement since the theater does not solicit grants, donations nor any assistance.

The owners' goal is to provide a small, live theater for Telegraph Hill and San Francisco with the accent on acting rather than production. They have met this goal with such plays as Pinter's DUMB WAITER, Mamet's AMERICAN BUFFALOE,

O'Neil's HUGHIE, Shakespeare's THE TEMPEST, Shepard's COWBOY MOUTH, and various new works by local playwrights.

Bannam Place Theater is owned by Robert Hinish and Paul O'Leary. Robert Hinish is a film maker and professional publicist. Paul O'Leary is a computer headhunter, published playwright, and a poet.

Off Union Street, near Grant, Bannam Place Theater at #50-A, the basement entrance is unimposing. Down a few steps and into the small lobby an exhibition by local painters and photographers changes with each new production. The theater just beyond is surprisingly roomy yet intimate with seats on two side of the room. Behind the square stage area are dressing rooms and a homemade dimmer board for lighting. The two dressing rooms, under the Bannam Place sidewalk, are curiously interesting. Light glows softly in the ceiling of each room, through the round glass covers set in the sidewalk, looking like mosaics of thick Coke bottle bottoms. Ladies' heels click on the street as they walk unsuspectingly over the theater dressing rooms.

While each partner may choose the play he would like to do, characters, costumes and sets must be considered. Productions are kept simple with not too many actors. Five actors will accommodate the space better than fourteen. WAITING FOR GODOT would be feasible; CYRANO DE BERGERAC would not. Plays coming up include Harder's TRYING ANGLES, Taylor and Bologna's IT HAD TO BE YOU, and Vegas's musical CAFE DE PRESSO.

The building is owned by Jim Wong who has been most supportive, and the theater is proud to have passed required inspections with only a few modest alterations. Expenses of newspaper advertising and a 3,000 to 4,000 mailing list are partly ameliorated by renting the theater so that two events run simultaneously on different nights, with poetry readings on Sunday afternoons. Actors are often friends who get together and do their own productions. Attendance is by neighborhood people, those who have heard about the theater and drop ins. Tickets are a reasonable \$2 to \$10. During the one inter-

mission coffee, wine, mineral water and locally baked cookies are available.

Robert and Paul are optimistic that Bannam Place Theater will continue as a viable, professional theater. It is important to the neighborhood and the community.

Helen von Ammon

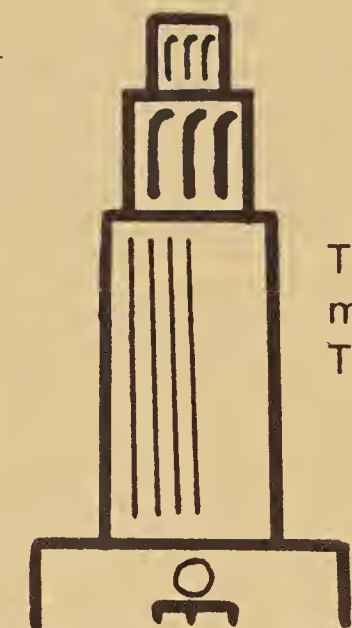
Editor's Note: Helen wrote this piece before the theater's closing.

Churchill Alley Garage / Vallejo Street Garage Project

Plans to build a 330 stall short-term parking garage at the site of the present North Beach garage on Vallejo are progressing. In June, the city made its final offer of \$3.95 million to the owners of the property who are asking \$6 million. By press time no answer had been received. If refused, the next step would be to start condemnation proceedings to take the property by right of eminent domain. On August 1st The Parking Authority voted an Issue of Intent for \$30 million in Bonds for acquisition and construction of Vallejo / Churchill. Phillip Chin, acting Director, stated at this meeting that the existing Vallejo Street garage should not be given over to long-term parking. It is feasible to have two garages on Vallejo. Most of the existing problem is with police vehicles and lack of enforcement. Every effort should be made to move Central Police Station to a better location. Remodeling the existing Police Station would not solve their traffic and parking problems. Planned expansion of their forces would only exacerbate their problems, and they would like to find another site. Talks are underway toward this goal.

Nancy Katz

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Chevron Thumbs its Nose at Neighborhoods & Clients

On June 13, 1989, Chevron presented a silver award to Dick Mary, the dealer who managed the popular Chevron station at Bay & Columbus for over 19 years. On August 31, Dick Mary was booted out by Chevron and the station fenced in.

Petitions with 1400 signatures, asking to keep the station going were ignored. So were hundreds of letters. So were appeals from neighborhood organizations, the North Beach Chamber of Commerce, Senator Marks - and legislation initiated by Supervisors Hallinan and Walker to place controls on Service Station closures.

THD President Rod Freebairn-Smith put it well: "It is the only local station (and the last) whose ownership know the community in depth, providing invaluable small repairs and tuneups, tire and battery changes, with sensitive management that even finds time to keep the kids going on their bikes. Richard Mary has made Chevron a welcome name in North Beach; don't let corporate headquarters destroy that image."

Chevron stonewalled the community and their representatives. Visions of a real-estate "wind-fall" were conjured up by the regional manager. He may have to face a rude awakening when the community and their representatives take a hard look at any development plan cherished by a company that thumbs its nose at the community it claims to serve.

Bob Katz

SAFE — A Success Story

Late in the spring our Green Street apartment building was burglarized by someone who apparently entered from the rear of the building. A day or two before, I had heard of another burglary up the street. I got on the phone and called the members of our SAFE group which comprises the 300 block of Green St., San Antonio and Vallejo Sts. I also got in touch with the victim in the 400 block of Green. In talking to these neighbors I learned of other incidents - burglaries, as well as sightings of a prowler who was working from the alleys and back gardens of the area. Soon I had quite a file of information which I was able to pass on to Captain Murphy at Central Station. The burglar was caught in July and our information was of assistance to police, providing witnesses who had seen the prowler. He's back in jail and we will follow the progress of the case.

We couldn't have done any of this without our SAFE group, formed by Pat Lorentzen in 1986. It started with a core of THD members who live in the

neighborhood. Before our first meeting, and before each subsequent get-together, we distributed flyers (provided by SAFE) throughout the area. Through SAFE, residents got to know each other and the spirit of "neighborhood" was enhanced. When we had an emergency, we were able to help each other out by alerting the area to the problem and assisting the police in solving it.

SAFE (Safety Awareness For Everyone) is a neighborhood program in which you and your neighbors get together to learn how to protect yourselves, your family and your property. It is a cooperative effort between private citizens and the S.F. Police Department. The SAFE office at the Hall of Justice will help a block organize, providing staff assistance, literature, and suggestions and help in arranging for speakers for your group. If you want to organize your block, or if you would like more information, please call me at 986-0472. This is a valuable program which should be in operation all over the hill.

Catherine Donnelly



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Membership Report

The North Beach Fair was very productive as a source of new members. I'm sure our success was due to the enthusiastic volunteers who manned the booth and to Rod and Janet's signs and decorations. Thanks to all who helped out during the two-day event. We have a new flyer describing THD's activities. If you have a friend or a neighbor who is not a member, pick up a flyer at the next function, or call me and I'll mail it out. Welcome to the new THD members who have joined since the last Semaphore went to press: Karin B. Anderson, Rick Barrett, Robert Barrett, Simon Bliss, Leo and Joan Borregard, Janet Broyles, Patrick Cannon, Bruce Collier, M.D., Kathleen Davidson, William Davidson, Robert Erwin and Lynne Ogata, Sandy Esposito and Hank Malasky, Kyle Fiore, Tim Huson, Lela Jahn, Robert E. Kates, Philip Knott, Dolly Lowe, George Markell, Christopher Martin, Joan McCoy, Constance Messer, Todd and Connie Meyer, Lorraine J. Moreno, George and Ann Nielsen, Woodrow A. North, North Beach Pizza, Tony Peet, Nora Quinn, Diana Rhodes, Larry Rosenthal, Evan Schlessinger, Miles Scully, Roberta Simoni, Phillip Sinclair, Ed Stadum, Kristen Steiner, Willis and Judy Taylor, Calvin and Catherine Tom, Katie Torchio, Elaine Turner, Carlos Valenzuela, Yumei Wang, and Claude Carlos White. The second, and final dues notice for membership was mailed on August 1st. Members who have not paid their dues by September 30th will be removed from the THD mailing list. Don't let this happen to you. Dues for fiscal year 89-90 are \$12.00 for an individual and \$24.00 a couple.

Catherine Donnelly

Telegraph Hill Bulletin

No. 5

May 1957

David Myrick, Correspondent

Bulletin No. 4 in April 1957 contained no news as the editor has 'been called out of town on business.' No. 5 reported the third birthday of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, celebrated on April 19, 1957, with a members' meeting, election of officers and directors, and a cake bearing a replica of Coit Tower.

Advertising appeared for the first time, integrated into the text of the Bulletin. The Grant Avenue Fair was to be on June 16, dedicated to Benny Bufano. Assembling of decorations was announced for three days two weeks prior to the Fair and three more the next week. The first delays in undergrounding wire were announced.

Gold has been found on Telegraph Hill in 1851, 1852 and 1878, but in each case after a brief flurry nothing came of further searched.

The Historian

MUNI Offers 1-Day, 3-Day 'Passports' for Tourists

The next time out-of-town guests descend when you're tied up at the office, send them off to explore the city on their own with a MUNI map and 'Passports.'

MUNI is now offering unlimited rides for tourists with its Passports, 1-day or 3-day passes which include \$1 discounts on admission at the DeYoung and Asian Art Museums, the Academy of Sciences and the Exploratorium.

Passports are available for \$6 (1 day) and \$10 (3 days) at Ghirardelli Square, Pier 39, the Cable Car Museum and STBS tickets, as well as at City Hall. For more information, call 673-6864.

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Board of Directors' Report

June — *Motions Passed*

- To thank Jerry Hurtado and Roger Boyer for their years of hard work on the Kearny St. park.
- Not to oppose a conditional use permit at a new cafe at 701 Union (amended not to include a white zone and to comply with existing parking rules.)
- To send a letter to Chevron opposing the closing of the Chevron station on Bay Street and also send a letter to the Land Use Committee.
- To increase dues to \$15 effective January, 1990.

June — *Motions Denied*

- To oppose the issuance of occupancy permit for the proposed aquarium until the F line is completed and functioning.

Social Committee News

On Sunday, July 9, we welcomed many new members at our cocktail party at Pier 23. Those in attendance agreed that the weather, the jazz and the beautiful display of hors d'oeuvres contributed to the success of the event. Special thanks to Virginia Sletteland who not only arranged the Pier 23 party, but has also planned our next new members cocktail party which will be held on Sunday, October 15 at El Tapatio.

The Sheraton at Fisherman's Wharf was the setting for our General Membership meeting on Monday, August 21. Michael Huerta, San Francisco Port Director, held our interest with a lively presentation on the port — past and present.

THD members and guests occupied 49 seats at Davies Symphony Hall on Thursday, September 7 for the 10th anniversary of All-San Francisco Night. The works of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Dvorak, as conducted by Maestro Blomstedt, made it an exciting evening.

At press time, we are planning our annual picnic at Coit Tower on September 24, a cocktail party on October 15, a general membership meeting on November 13, and our Christmas party on December 10.

Gerry Crowley

“NO” to I-80 Expansion

In June, SF Supes voted 8 to 1 (Nelder dissenting and 2 absent) to support East Bay opposition to Caltrans' plan to widen I-80. Supervisor Britt sponsored the motion which urges Caltrans to utilize transport systems for East Bay commuters and to preserve the delicate marshlands surrounding I-80. The THD board voted in February to support the motion.

The cities of Berkeley and Emeryville are refusing to issue the necessary right-of-way permits until further transportation studies are completed.

Gilliam recently wrote (8/20/89) in the SF CHRONICLE: “just to keep traffic from getting worse — not to improve it — would require widening major freeways to as many as 24 lanes each in the next 15 years...the freeway paradox, you have to keep growing faster just to stay in the same place.”

And at the expense of whom?

Sheryl Hamlin



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ny-Vallejo Parklet

urtado and Roger Boyer for
d a reminder to D.P.W. that
s are still not in place).

oy Daniels



THD Efforts at Pier 7 Realize a Great Fish Story

Telegraph Hill architects Rai Okamoto, Rod Freebairn-Smith and Sherwood Stockwell, recommended a series of public access points along the City's Bay frontage back in 1971. Bob Katz and Freebairn-Smith, who represented the Hill on the Citizen's Waterfront Committee and on the NEWAC Committee were instrumental in protecting the concepts, and in placing them within the BCDC's Special Area Plan. Later, Jim Augustino and Anne Halsted urged the Port to rebuild Pier 7 for a family fishing pier, with Rai Okamoto supporting from City Hall as the City's Planning Director. Hill Dwellers Bonnie Fisher and Boris Dramov at ROMA Architects were later hired to design the new Pier, and under the watchful eye of Anne Halsted, now President

of the Port Commission, the project was kept alive. It took a great many more city officials and citizen groups including Mary Burns and Tom Malloy at Parks and Recreation to realize the plan. A recent issue of the Semaphore told details of the new pier; it is the first new public pier since Aquatic Park's construction in the 1930's.

On August 9th, Mayor Agnos and a group of young children who hope to fish from the new Pier 7, inaugurated construction by air hammering a hole in the old structure, picnicing to an oom-pa-pa band with a spouting fire boat in the background to proclaim the day. It was a grand moment for Telegraph Hill and for the City. Katz, Halsted, Freebairn-Smith, Augustino, Okamoto, Dramov, Fisher, and many others were all there to savor this event 18 years after the original proposals were made.

Rod Freebairn-Smith



Mayor Agnos plays construction worker with the kids, while Okamoto, Katz, and Halsted (in hard hat) and others look on.



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Curt Baldwin Remembered

Curt was devoted to the Dwellers, and he showed it. Unfailingly courteous and cooperative, he was willing to help out with any task that furthered the cause, and that made The Hill a more attractive, safer place to live.

He liked people. And when the Dwellers needed to tackle a job requiring exceptional sensitivity, Curt was our man.

At picnics, parties, even weighty discussions of neighborhood or city business, Curt's ever-present sense of humor delighted everyone. Many an overly solemn, pompous presentation by some zealous official or "expert," wearily dragging on, was happily pierced and brought down to earth by one quick witticism shouted from the back of the room.

That was our Curt.


We miss him. We shall continue to miss him.

Bernie Bour
President 1962-64

An Independent Spirit

I first became acquainted with Curt through THD and later would occasionally run into him in North Beach. One evening while chatting over a cup of coffee he told me about the work he was doing with St. Vincent De Paul and asked me to join the local chapter which consisted of Curt and four others.

At that particular time Curt was in charge of collecting food from North Beach merchants and distributing it to the homeless through St. Francis church. That project had to be abandoned because of complaints from residents that the food line was unsightly and detracted from the ambience of North Beach. Curt sought and found alternative ways of helping the needy. Memorable was a Saturday morn-



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ing when he took me to visit a Nicaraguan family of five living in two small rooms in a ramshackle building on Powell Street. The mother did not speak English but through the children we were able to find out that the family had been unable to get public assistance. The Society, through Curt, assisted the family financially and eventually they were able to move to a larger apartment in the Mission area.

At Christmas Curt personally shopped at Safeway for groceries for the needy. He helped make up attractive baskets and delivered them to the projects. Once when I remonstrated with him for buying luxury items for the food baskets he simply said, "It's Christmas." Up to the end he helped prepare and personally delivered fresh sandwiches for distribution to the homeless in a shelter run by St. Vincent De Paul.

I last spoke with Curt about three weeks before he died when he called and invited me to attend the installation of Father Wang as Monsignor at St. Francis. When I saw him he was carrying his oxygen with him; I offered to stand in line to get his food — he said no, I can help myself. That phrase best describes Curt's attitude towards his illness; not alone did he help himself, he also helped others. His tenacious spirit, and acerbic wit will be missed by all of us.

Nora Quinn

Curtis Baldwin

"So good and modest a man should be known to the present members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers." (To quote our president, Rod Freebairn-Smith.) The following is written with help from Toby Bloxam, Greg Jones and Joan Naughten.



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Curtis Baldwin:

Curtis Baldwin was born and grew up in Iowa. He graduated in 1947 from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska after serving in World War II as a naval officer in many campaigns from 1943 to 1946. After the war ended, he lived for a few years in Paris, working for the U.S. Government. In the early 50's he arrived in San Francisco and settled on Telegraph Hill-first as a renter and then in the 60's as the owner of three properties, in all of which he lived: 1125 Kearny St., 29 Castle St., and 370 Chestnut St.

Curt became very active in the Telegraph Hill Dwellers in the 60's and 70's, serving 2 years as Director, 3 years as Treasurer, 2 years as President, and 1 year as Director Ex Officio-altogether 8 years on the Board of Directors.

These were turbulent times for the Dwellers. The members were contentious, unruly and vociferous. General meetings were fun for the participants, but often a sore trial for the presiding officer. Ditto the Board meetings. Curt had his hand in each effort to revise the By-Laws. Curt knew Robert's Rules of Order-even if some of us didn't. Possessing a biting wit, he could cut a person down to size if necessary-or even if not!

During his years in Paris he had acquired an impressive collection of antiques which he brought home and which ended up packed into his flat on Chestnut Street. He greatly enjoyed the milieu of North Beach and the Hill which he loved. The fighting Dwellers were a part of that and Curt was a devoted supporter. At one time or another he must have been drafted onto almost every committee ever devised. Always a fighter, he wrote letters and letters and letters to City Hall. Becoming so familiar with City Hall, he even worked there

for a time. He didn't like it much. He also worked for an advertising agency in the city.

Many members may remember Curt as a self-appointed "sergeant-at-arms" at THD meetings, often restoring order by shouting "quiet" or even "shut-up" whenever the members were getting out of hand. A great help to the Chair! I like to remember him as someone who cared about people, in general, and about the Telegraph Hill Dwellers in particular. Yes, Curt cared a great deal: another side of him, not very well known, was his incredibly faithful devotion and quiet generosity in support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society's shelter program. He wrote a very touching article about Carol Hewitt. (See Semaphore No. 89, November 1984.) They were great friends, and after her death, Curt carried on the tradition of her New Years Eve parties as an ever genial host. I also remember his 4th of July invitations to friends to come and watch the fireworks.

Curt was also a cat lover. When he died on July 20, 1989 at the age of 65, he left behind him 2 cats, his family, and numerous friends-many of whom attended the memorial service which was held for him on Saturday, July 29, 1989 at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi. All of us will miss him.

John W. Holmes



Peter Macchiarini Honored

North Beach's beloved artist Peter Macchiarini was honored on his 80th birthday by family and friends Sunday, August 27th at The Italian-American Athletic Club.

Peter's landlord, The Chinese Community Housing Corporation, sponsored the event. Gordom Lam was the evening's host commenting on the significance of celebrating 80 years of life in the Chinese culture. Gordon Chin presented a cake from CCHC with the Chinese symbols of long life on them.

Brad Paul of Mayor Agnos' office showed a Proclamation that August 27, 1989 was declared Peter Macchiarini Day.

Many of Peter's family and friends were present. His son, Dan, gave a poignant toast from the family. Tito Patri spoke for the friends.

Peter proudly introduced his granddaughter, Emma, who recently achieved fame for being the first eight-year-old to swim the Golden Gate Bridge.

The "unofficial" mayor of North Beach, Peter and his wife, Virginia, have in many ways contributed to the betterment of our neighborhood. They were also the founders of The Grant Street Fair.

Tricia Brown

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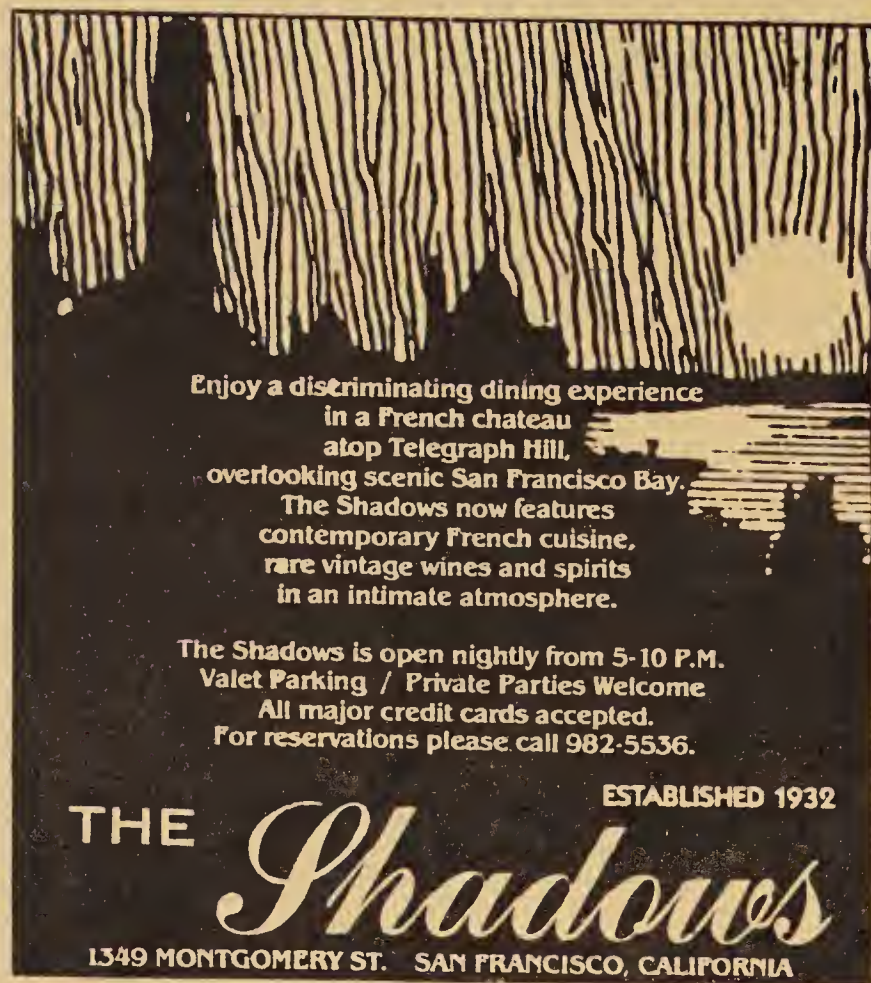
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Park and Rec Denies Request for Briones Plaque

The Recreation and Park Commission denied the appeal of the Women's Heritage Museum to place a plaque honoring Juana Briones in Washington Square at its June meeting, despite the endorse of THD, North Beach Neighbors and other groups. The Museum hopes to gain another hearing before the Commission this fall.

Juana Briones was one of the first settlers of Yerba Buena, the village that was to become San Francisco, building an adobe at Powell and Filbert in 1835 or 1836. She farmed there until 1847, supplying milk, eggs and vegetables to ships anchoring in the cove as well as the growing settlement.

The Women's Heritage Museum points out that few women, and virtually no Hispanic women, are recognized in San Francisco, and hopes to remedy that with some sort of public recognition of Juana Briones.

The Museum and the Bay Area Network of Latinas are planning some sort of observance of the centennial of Juana Briones' death this December.

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Valet Parking in Garfield Playground

Hill Dwellers are divided over valet parking from the Shadows and Julius Castle Restaurants in Garfield School's playyard. Restaurateur Jeff Pollack pays the school system \$750 a month—money they sorely need. Parking on upper Montgomery is impossible at best for the residents; therefore the school yard solution does give relief from the parking by the restaurant's valets.

On the other hand, residents of the Filbert, Kearny, Genoa area complain about the noise, danger, and fast driving from 6:00 pm till midnight. Parents and young children used to have an organized baseball game, and teenagers played basketball. Now opponents of Garfield valet parking say the kids are denied their playspace after 6:00 pm, and debris, grease and oil are often left behind.

A vote was taken at the THD August dinner meeting — 40 supported valet parking at Garfield, 10 were opposed, 9 undecided. What do you think?

In Favor: Call Jeanne Milligan 989-0494

Opposed: Call Ted Brown 986-0101

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THD Continues To Oppose the China Basin Stadium

For over a decade, our organization actively participated in building a broad-based consensus on the best land use for our Waterfront and the Bay. As a result, basic principles were adopted in the BCDC Special Area Plan, the San Francisco Masterplan for the NE Waterfront, the Comprehensive Plan for Recreation and Open Space and the Rincon/South Beach Redevelopment Plan. Among these basic principles, specifically for the China Basin area, were maritime use, housing, the 40 ft. height limit, open space and maximum interface of land and water.

In October 1983, THD declared that a stadium in the China Basin area would violate all four major plans. Without taking position on a stadium as such, the THD adopted a policy opposing its location at China Basin. This declaration continues as the THD position.

In order to give our member an opportunity to familiarize themselves with all aspects of this and other controversial issues, we mailed out postcards, announcing the traditional "Issues Night" on October 5, in conjunction with adjacent neighborhood organizations.

City Guide Offers Special Neighborhood Walks in October

City Guides, which offers free neighborhood walks year-round, offers an expanded schedule in October, including a series of walks led by special guests.

On October 19, historical researcher Bill Kostura shares his knowledge on a tour of early Russian Hill, and architectural historian Michael Crowe looks at examples of Art Deco in the Marina October 28.

A Telegraph Hill walk is slated for October 29, leaving from the Columbus statue at Coit Tower at 2 p.m. The North Beach walk starts every Saturday at 10 a.m. from Sts. Peter and Paul, as it does year-round.

A sampling of other walks in nearby neighborhoods:

Russian Hill	10/1, 10/15, 11 a.m.
Cow Hollow	10/8, 10/22, 10 a.m.
Nob Hill	10/8, 10/22, 2 p.m.
Waterfront by Full Moon	10/14, 8 p.m.

Pick up a complete schedule at any San Francisco Library, or call 558-3981.



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Wearable Works of Art

If didn't start out as a treasure hunt, but my interview with Helen von Ammon certainly turned out that way. Up Montgomery Street, a left turn and then a right, into a quiet alley and into a home filled top to bottom with yarn of every color. One room was filled with huge bags of musk ox down and a spinning wheel; the walls in another room were lined from floor to ceiling with skeins of yarn, knitted samples covering every surface. It's a house where almost anyone could feel creative.

Saying that Helen knits sweaters is like saying that Shakespeare strings words together. For instance, when she begins a project, she doesn't just whip down to Merrill's and pick up a few skeins of yarn. She travels to Alaska, where she works as a volunteer, feeding and caring for arctic musk oxen. (Not those forlorn, matted specimens at the zoo; Helen can show you pictures of their more fortunate relatives—beautiful, dignified animals with intelligent eyes. And no, they don't have an odor, either.) At the musk ox farm, she combs the down from the oxen (the down known as "qiviut" in the Eskimo language, is the soft underwool beneath the ox's shaggy coat). She washes the qiviut, picks it over to save only the finest down, and spins it into yarn. "Spinning is very soporific," she says. "That's why I have a TV in the spinning room, to keep me awake." That's important when you realize the yarn for one sweater may take as many as 40 hours to spin.

Spining isn't just a mechanical step in the process of knitting these one-of-a-kind sweaters. What makes each item unique is the design creativity that begins with choosing different combinations of yarns and spinning them

together. Besides qiviut, Helen's yarns may combine silk, wool, llama, alpaca, rayon, cotton, angora, and even goose down. "I always plan my yarns as combinations of fibers and color, never using just a single element, as if I were mixing colors with fibers instead of in paint."

In fact, she spent many years as a painter, studying at the San Francisco Art Institute and in Japan. Her paintings cover nearly every wall in her home and are very reminiscent of her fiber art—rich in color and texture, simple in design and subject. She doesn't paint anymore, however—"I just don't have the time. I paint in fiber now."

Helen and I spent most of the interview in the showroom. I wasn't prepared for how amazing her art is—and I couldn't resist trying on almost everything she had. Yes, they're sweaters or shawls or hats or mittens, but they're really wearable works of art. Most use a juxtaposition of textures and colors that create a specific mood—you look at one garment, for example, and the word "whimsical" comes to mind. Or eccentric, or elegant, or even humorous (one hat, for example, has an egg hidden in a goose feather nest in the back). Many garments use qiviut or angora to create a cloud of color, with a contrasting thread or stripe of shiny rayon or metallic or cotton yarn.

Most of the sweaters are simple designs that set off the unusual yarns. You won't see popcorn stitches or cables—Helen lets the exotic fibers speak for themselves. One of my favorite items is a sweater coat with vertical stripes of tan, grey and cream qiviut. The design is a simple cardigan falling gracefully from shoulder to knee. This sweater wasn't just a simple weekend project: processing and spinning the qiviut required about 80 hours; knitting and finishing another 48 hours.

One of the most intriguing sweaters is almost impossible to describe: it's eight to ten yarns knitted together--smooth yarns are nubby, thick and thin, shiny and matte. They are navy blue, aqua, green, with a metallic spark here and there. The sweater itself is a patchwork of colors, edged with a matte bronze yarn at cuff, front and bottom. Sound eccentric? It is--yet it's the ultimate dignified sweater, and it would look great on a man, too.

By now you won't be surprised to know that I came away with two works of art of my own: a qiviut and angora sweater vest in greys and beige, and a cardigan in copper and mauve wool with a matching hat. Not everyone has got to get so carried away, however; there are items for every budget, from hats, mittens, and scarves to sweater coats. But the best way to appreciate this unique wearable art is to see for yourself. There will be an open studio the weekends of October 21-22 and October 28-29, from 1-5 pm--and champagne will be served. The address is 48 San Antonio Place on Telegraph Hill (off Kearny, between Green and Vallejo). For further information, call 397-7799.

Melissa Crowley



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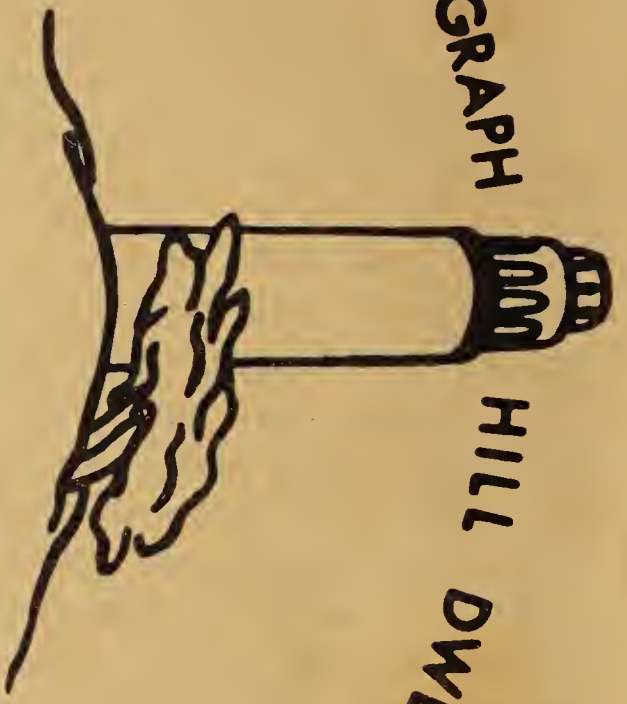
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